

REPORT ON THE KOREAN MINISTRY PLAN:

ADVANCING UNITED METHODIST MINISTRIES AMONG KOREANS

“Our vision is to integrate Wesleyan tradition and Korean spirituality to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”

“Our core values are passionate spirituality, sacrificial stewardship, radical hospitality and small group ministry.”

The Korean Ministry Plan, entitled, “Advancing United Methodist Ministries Among Korean Americans,” represents the first comprehensive, nationwide mission initiative of The United Methodist Church to develop and vitalize Korean American ministries in North America. After a comprehensive four-year study on the issues, needs, and mission opportunities of the Korean American United Methodist community, the 2000 General Conference enthusiastically approved what was initially called the Korean American National Plan, as did consecutive General Conferences until 2016. (It was scheduled to be reviewed and voted upon at the 2020 General Conference, but due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it was postponed to 2024). The name has been changed to the Korean Ministry Plan: Advancing United Methodist Ministries Among Koreans. For the coming quadrennium, it is expected that the plan will continue to reflect the global nature of The United Methodist Church and its ministry while faithfully fulfilling specific local missional tasks, with the intention to be a true glocal (global-local) plan.

“The growth of Korean American United Methodist churches means growth for the whole United Methodist Church!” This statement expresses the core spirit of the Korean Ministry Plan. The plan’s intention is that the Korean churches and ministries will be active and integral parts of the connectional life of The United Methodist Church, and will make important contributions to the life, mission, and ministry of the entire denomination for the glory of God.

The Korean Ministry Plan of the last 8 years aimed to create, nurture, and enable communities of faith in disciple-making ministries, to build bridges in cross-cultural/racial and cross-generational ministries, and to be agents of social justice in a global context. Pursuit of this vision focused on five main areas:

- Congregational Development & New Church Start
- Leadership Formation
- Next Generation Ministries
- Justice-related Ministries
- International Missions

I. KOREAN MINISTRY PLAN: ACHIEVEMENTS

Based on these five vision areas, the following specific ministries were implemented during the 2017-2020 and 2021-2024 quadrennium.

A. Congregational Development and New Church Starts. In the early years of the plan, much energy and resources were focused on planting new congregations and enabling the existing mission congregations to become self-supporting. Recently, there was a shift not only to revitalization and congregational development but to launching a number of re-start projects through the implementation of effective ministry strategies. The plan, however, continued to promote and assist new church starts despite challenges due to the Covid 19 pandemic and the disaffiliation. During this period, it:

1. Developed sixteen new Korean-language churches in full partnership with annual conferences, jurisdictional Korean missions, and local Korean UMC congregations with the goal of becoming chartered and self-supporting in the subsequent three to five years.
2. Nurtured both existing and recently launched mission churches to grow in their life and mission.
3. Continued implementation of the \$1 million “Matching Fund Campaign” informally among Korean American United Methodist congregations for new church starts.
4. Collaborated with the “Nehemiah Campaign” of the Korean Association of the UMC.

B. Leadership Formation. The Korean United Methodist Church realizes that leadership formation for clergy and laity is a vital part of a congregation’s sustainability and growth. However, leadership formation needs to be broad in scope since the leadership of the Korean Ministry has become increasingly diverse in terms of age, ethnic makeup, background, leadership style, and cultural orientation. In this period, there has also been a gradual shift from focusing on “revival and growth” in leadership training to “spirituality and the healthy church.” Listed below are goals implemented in leadership formation:

1. Continued to carry out a comprehensive small-group leader-training module for pastors and laity, utilizing the Korean language resource “Longing to Meet You,” and further utilized this resource in collaboration with the School for Congregational Development and several Annual Conferences.
2. Created a task force on “confliction transformation” in collaboration with regional Korean caucuses for 12 regional training events.
3. Launched three “Korean Academy of Spiritual Formation” programs in collaboration with the Upper Room of Discipleship Ministries (formerly GBOD).
4. Supported leadership development for Korean clergy, including clergywomen, serving in cross-cultural/racial appointments. A key program for this is ‘Madang’.

5. Supported future next generation clergy by offering a “United Methodist Seminarians and Ministerial Candidates Information and Mentoring Session” in partnership with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

6. Launched and implemented, in addition, during the Covid 19 pandemic, a webinar series on topics such as digital ministry, self-care & spirituality, Discipleship Bible Study, and coaching.

C. Next Generation Ministries

Ministries serving second- and third-generation Korean Americans require new strategies for reaching out to an immigrant community that continues to diversify in age, culture, and ethnicity (through interracial marriages). The Korean Ministry Plan provides critical support in recruiting and developing new church leaders — clergy and laity — from the community. In this regard, the following strategies were effectively implemented:

1. Developed ten new English-language congregations in full partnership with annual conferences, jurisdictional Korean missions, Path 1 and local Korean congregations.

2. Supported fully the Nexus, a next-generation caucus, for Korean American English-speaking clergy, laity, and missionaries.

3. Strengthened leadership development through the Korean American United Methodist Youth Initiative, College Initiative, and the Children’s Ministry Initiative.

4. Utilized the English edition of the small-group training resource, “Longing to Meet You” and organized training events in English for next-generation clergy and laity.

D. Justice-related Ministries

The plan enlarged its areas of focus to include justice ministry. During this period, it provided support for changes in immigration policy, recognizing the needs of the immigrant community and their struggles. It also launched a Task Force for Racial Justice to work on racial discriminations in and around the church. The plan was also active in efforts for peace and reunification of the Korean peninsula. It supported and helped to organize an international peace conference for the Korean peninsula hosted by the General Board of Global Ministries.

E. International Missions: Global Partnerships

The Korean Ministry Plan worked to develop new partnerships with central conferences, autonomous Methodist denominations, and other global organizations. In particular, the Plan collaborated with the Global Ministries and the Korean Association of the UMC in a mission project in Japan, Korea, and Mongolia. A team visited these countries to train clergy and laity in small-group ministry utilizing the English edition of “Longing to Meet You.” A similar project focused on the Korean diaspora in Europe.

II. KOREAN MINISTRY PLAN GOALS FOR 2025-2028: THE UNITED METHODIST COUNCIL ON KOREAN MINISTRIES

Across the past quadrennia, the Korean American National Plan faithfully served The United Methodist Church in strengthening Korean American ministries. Now, Korean ministries are important and influential not only in the national church, but also globally, a fact reflected in the change of the name to “Korean Ministry Plan,” a glocal (global-local) plan

The Korean Ministry Plan goals for 2025-2028 reflect three of the four focus areas of The United Methodist Church: leadership development, congregational development, and ministry with the poor. Following are eight specific goals of the plan for the next quadrennium.

III. FOCUS AREA: LEADERSHIP FORMATION

Leadership formation in clergy and laity is a vital part of the church’s sustainability and growth. The objective is to identify, recruit, and train both current and upcoming leaders. National and regional clergy and lay leadership training events and projects are supported by direct funding and leadership resources, in addition to collaboration with various ministry groups in the national Korean American community and general program agencies.

Goal 1: Next Generation Ministries. To build, support, and strengthen the leadership capacity of the Next Generation Ministries; to be achieved through the support and nurturing of:

1. The Youth Initiative (YI) — a national leadership conference for Korean American United Methodist youth, the training of campus ministers and college leaders through the College Initiative (CI), and a national network of children’s ministry pastors and teachers through the Children’s Ministry Initiative (CMI), that provides training and support to pastors and churches.
2. The Nexus Ministry, a national coordinating caucus for the support and development of Next Generation clergy, laity, and congregations.
3. The Nexus Internship, an internship program for college students and seminarians to help young people discern ministry as a vocation, and the Seminarian Summit, a collaborative strategy to connect young adults, seminarians, and UMC seminary staff.
4. National and regional network groups for the **Next Generation** pastors and seminarians, as well as campus ministers.

B. Goal 2: Effective Leadership for Clergy and Laity. To nurture effective clergy and laity leadership through existing national networks, to be achieved by:

1. Further development of training for clergywomen and clergy serving in cross-racial appointments (National Association of Korean American United Methodist Clergywomen and National Association of Korean American United Methodist Pastors Serving Cross-Racial Appointments), and implementation of mentoring/coaching programs for such newly ordained and experienced pastors in partnership with other professional education programs.

2. Development of Korean female lay leadership through collaboration with the National Network of Korean United Methodist Women.

C. Goal 3: Transformational Leadership. To develop effective leadership in the Korean church through clergy and laity leadership training programs that nurture spiritual growth and enable healthy church development, including:

1. An effective mentoring/coaching program for young and experienced Korean pastors and new mission congregations.

2. A “Conflict Transformation” training course to encourage ministries of reconciliation with special focus on mediation and healing after disaffiliation.

3. An “Academy for Spiritual Formation” in partnership with the Upper Room.

IV. FOCUS AREA: CONGREGATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The primary focus of this area is to launch new viable congregations and nurture them to become self-sustaining churches, which are key signs of a vital congregation. A new strategy of church “restarts” will continue to help to spur new growth in existing congregations, and small-group ministries will be encouraged.

A. Goal 4: Plant New Korean-speaking Congregations. To plant twelve (12) new (and restart) Korean Ministry congregations that will become sustaining within three to five years, relying on:

1. Partnerships with annual conferences, jurisdictional Korean missions, Path 1, and local congregations to locate sites, raise funds, and identify pastors.

2. Direct support to new congregations as they develop innovative methods to grow both in their congregational life and mission, including daily devotional and small-group training materials and clergy and lay training.

3. Providing support especially for those congregations affected by disaffiliation through conflict and loss of members.

B. Goal 5: Plant New English-speaking Congregations. To plant five (5) new English-speaking Korean American congregations to become self-sustaining within three to five years, relying on:

1. Partnerships with annual conferences, jurisdictional Korean mission directors/superintendents, and local congregations to locate sites, raise funds, and identify pastors for each church.

2. Consultation teams to provide support for the newly launched Next Generation churches, and English small-group training materials for clergy and laity.

C. Goal 6: Small-group Ministry. To implement a comprehensive small-group ministry strategy for pastors and laity through:

1. Promotion and distribution of the Korean and English publications of “Longing to Meet You” small-group leadership training materials and collaborate with the National Plan for Hispanic and Latino Ministry its Spanish version.

2. Development of a new Small Group ministry resources website with documents, videos, and networking materials.

3. Direct funding and leadership resources for national and regional small-group ministry training based on “Longing to Meet You.”

4. Specialized small group ministry resources and training for specific contexts, including laity and seminarians.

V. FOCUS AREA: MINISTRY WITH THE POOR

The Korean Ministry Plan, in partnership with other agencies and organizations, will focus on support for justice ministry in the context of emerging needs. As immigrants, the Korean American church understands the importance of being connected to the global community especially in the area of Korean diaspora. The plan will also work on fostering global partnerships for international missions.

A. Goal 7: Justice Ministry in the Context of Emerging Needs. To engage the church in justice-related ministries such as the peace movement of the Korean peninsula and immigration reform, and racial justice seeking to achieve this goal through:

1. Collaboration with other agencies and organizations, such as Global Ministries and Church and Society, which focus on ministries with immigrants, global migration, and peace issues.

2. Building awareness in the Korean community of peace efforts for the purpose of the reunification of the Korean Peninsula.

3. Supporting local congregations that have immigrant-focused ministries and collecting and sharing resources available to assist undocumented immigrants, especially within the Korean American community.

B. Goal 8: Global Partnerships. To develop new relationships with organizations globally, expanding the work of the Korean Ministry Plan beyond the United States, achieving this goal through:

1. Developing and sustaining relationships with global and ecumenical organizations, especially with autonomous Methodist denominations.
2. Help planting new churches and starting new mission projects internationally through partnerships with global ecumenical organizations and autonomous Methodist denominations in Latin America, Southeast Asia, and Africa.
3. Collaborating with central conferences and existing Korean congregations, building relationships and providing resources to strengthen Korean United Methodist faith communities throughout the world.

To fulfill the work described above, a national office shall be continued with one full-time, executive staff person, and an additional staff member—a Program Associate within Global Ministries. The Executive Committee of the United Methodist Council on Korean Ministries will provide supervision for the executive of the Plan within the personnel policies of Global Ministries.

In addition to the standing committees, the Korean Ministry Plan plans to strengthen and keep the following ministry teams active for implementing effectively the goals describes above:

- Racial Justice
- Small Group Ministry (Academy)
- Digital Ministry
- Conflict Transformation

APPENDIX I — Key New Korean Church Plants and Re-starts (2017-2024)

- The First Korean United Methodist Church of Prattville, Prattville, AL
- Johns Creek Korean UMC, Johns Creek, GA
- The Shepherd Korean United Methodist Church, Bayside, NY
- Lord's Grace Church, Ridgefield, NJ
- Joosarang UMC, Brea, CA
- Ridgewood UMC Korean Congregation, Ridgewood, NJ,
- Torrance Korean Mission (RE), Torrance, CA
- Crescenta Valley Korean UMC (RE), Montrose, CA
- Christ UMC, North Wales, PA

- Metropolitan Korean UMC(RE), New York, NY
- Eau Claire Korean Fellowship, Eau Claire, WI
- Arizona Korean UMC (RE), Mesa, AZ
- Gleaning Faith Community, Colorado Springs, CO
- Madison: Korean Ministry (RE), Madison, WI
- Manoah Korean Worship, Clarence Center, NY
- Grace Bridge Korean UMC, Menomonie, WI
- Next Generation English Congregation for College/Young Adult Group, Grace Korean UMC, Palisades Park, NJ
- Good Seed KUMC English Ministry, Auburn, WA
- ReNew Church, South Pasadena, CA
- Oikon UMC, Missouri City, TX

APPENDIX II — Proposed Organization (2025-2028)

A. Council Members

- Bishops named by the Council of Bishops (2)
- Executive Director (ex-officio) (1)
- Representative of The Korean Association of The United Methodist Church (1)
- Program Area Ministry Team Coordinators (3)
- Representative of National Association of Pastors Serving in Cross-cultural Appointments (1)
- Representative of the Nexus (Next Generation English Ministry Caucus) (1)
- Representative of National Association of Korean American United Methodist Clergywomen (1)
- Representative of the National Network of Korean United Methodist Women (1)
- Laity (1 male and 1 female) chosen by the Council of Bishops (2)
- At large members, if needed

B. Resource Persons

The following resource/liason persons may be invited to attend the Council meetings as needed (with voice but no vote):

- Bishops representing five Jurisdictions: NCJ, SCJ, WJ, NEJ, SEJ
- Representatives (one each) of Global Ministries, Discipleship Ministries, Higher Education and Ministry, and United Methodist Communications, who shall attend at the expense of their respective agencies
- Jurisdictional Korean Mission Superintendents (or its equivalent)

C. Program Area Ministry Teams

- Congregational Development
- Leadership Development
- Next Generation Ministry

D. Executive Committee

- Chair (1)
- Vice-Chair (1)
- Program Area Coordinators (3)
- Ex-Officio: Executive Director (1)
- National Caucus (1)
- Clergy Woman (1)
- Resource Person: Global Ministries(1)

E. Funding Review Committee

- Chair (1)
- Program Area Coordinators (3)
- Ex-Officio: Executive Director, staff — no vote (1)